

**City of Miami Beach City Commission Workshop
Commission Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall
1700 Convention Center Drive
July 15, 2002**

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Mayor David Dermer	Present
Vice-Mayor Richard L. Steinberg	Present
Commissioner Matti Herrera Bower	in at 2: 15 p.m.
Commissioner Simon Cruz	absent
Commissioner Luis R. Garcia, Jr.	Present
Commissioner Saul Gross	in at 2: 15 p.m.
Commissioner Jose Smith	in at 2: 15 p.m.

City Manager Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Attorney Murray H. Dubbin
City Clerk Robert E. Parcher

**Miami Beach Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities
Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee**

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ATTENTION ALL LOBBYISTS

Chapter 2, Article VII, Division 3 of the City Code of Miami Beach entitled "Lobbyists" requires the registration of all lobbyists with the City Clerk prior to engaging in any lobbying activity with the City Commission, any City Board or Committee, or any personnel as defined in the subject Code sections. Copies of the City Code sections on lobbyists laws are available in the City Clerk's office. Questions regarding the provisions of the Ordinance should be directed to the Office of the City Attorney.

Meeting called to order at 2:09:42 p.m.

Mayor Dermer introduced the item and commended the Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee for their hard work. He requested the Administration to invite the Committee members to a Commission Meeting for formal recognition.

Jorge Gonzalez, City Manager, gave an introduction. He stated that about a year ago he was listening to the concerns of the community and it became obvious that an in-depth look at the parks system was necessary. He ran this by Commissioner Bower who endorsed the idea of creating the Miami Beach Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities Citizens' Committee. The committee was made up of users of the parks. The objective was to have a wide range of participation on the committee. The committee selected Debra Leibowitz as the chair. He made reference to the report produced by the

Committee titled: Serious Play: A Comprehensive Action Plan for Our Parks" - A report by the Parks & Recreation Programs Blue Ribbon Citizens Committee, undated. The value of this Committee is that they have established a blueprint or direction on what the residents want and deserve from their parks system.

Debra Leibowitz, Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Programs Blue Ribbon Citizens Committee introduced the members and gave a PowerPoint Presentation. She stated that one priority that the entire group agreed upon was that the City of Miami Beach must make Parks and Recreation a priority in order to dramatically enhance the quality-of-life for its residents. The Report is broken down into the following section: Policies and Procedures/Organizational Recommendations, Staffing Recommendations, Facilities Recommendation, Safety Recommendations, Programming Recommendations, Funding Recommendations, and Communications and Marketing Recommendations. The intent of this document was to insure that the document stands on its own and does not need the members of this committee to keep it moving.

Ms. Leibowitz reviewed some of the recommendations in each section.

Ms. Leibowitz stated that the City of Hialeah has one person whose sole responsibility is to obtain corporate sponsors for the parks programs which brings in thousand and thousands of dollars.

Ms. Leibowitz stated that this group would like to be either part of or help to facilitate the implementation.

Jorge Gonzalez, City Manager, stated that the Administration is already addressing some of the suggestions. Out of 88 identifiable recommendations the City is addressing the majority of them and others will be addressed the next fiscal year. To keep this committee active is a good idea recognizing this is a multi-year task; it will not all be done in one year. The Committee's guidance is invaluable to the Administration. He recognized Max Sklar and Maria Ruiz for their effort and time spent with the task force.

Vice-Mayor Steinberg challenged the Administration to move forward with the recommendations.

Commissioner Bower stated that Mayor Gelber was instrumental in bringing the Boy's and Girl's Club to Miami Beach to filled a need for the children. She stated that out of 260 children, 69 are from outside of the Miami Beach, 59 of the 69 have parents that work in the City of Miami Beach. They have a program that parents pay \$25 registration fee for the entire summer (June 17 - August 8). There are also 115 kids for the after school program. She thanked the Committee for their work.

Commissioner Smith stated that when you consider all the parks in the City, in addition to the ones that are not listed, like the Shane Watersports Center, the golf courses, the Boardwalk, the Botanical Garden, and the beaches, we have a lot or parks. The City is spending \$4M in the North Beach Youth Center. We do not run the parks for profit. When you look at all the activities the City is providing, only the City of Hialeah provides more programming than the City of Miami Beach. Miami Beach is doing a pretty good job in giving the community what they are looking for. We do not want to limit what we do to just the major sports, but we are spreading ourselves too thin.

Commissioner Smith asked if a park impact fee can be established, which Miami-Dade County already has in place, and which is similar to the impact fee imposed by the Arts in Public Places Committee, as a way to fund additional capital improvements for the parks. He requested the Administration to research. **Robert Middaugh to handle.**

Commissioner Garcia thanked the committee for their work. He stated that he has requested the Beach Patrol be placed under the Fire or the Police Department where they can benefit from the resources and training allocated to public safety.

Commissioner Garcia requested a copy of the Parks and Recreation Department's budget for the last three years. **Patricia Walker to handle.**

Commissioner Gross thanked the panel for a terrific job. He stated that whatever programs the City has it must do them well. He stated that his direction would be not to expand the programming too much, but to continue to develop the facilities on the capital side and make sure they are maintained to an excellent standard. Continue to do the heavily used programming. There are 26 parks, plus the ones that Commissioner Smith added. The Administration needs to look at efficiencies in the program as well as restructuring. He agreed with the committee that mid level management and accountability is needed. The issue of communication between the Administration and the public is extremely important. As a commissioner he resolves to pay more attention to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Commissioner Bower stated that her husband uses the Flamingo Park everyday. She is frustrated, but her grandchildren attend the parks and they are happy.

Anais Acuna spoke about Viernes Cultural (Cultural Fridays), lifeguards, and volleyball on the beach.

Amy Agnoli spoke.

Jodie Knofsky spoke.

Julio Magrisso spoke.

Bernie Winer spoke.

Commissioner Bower suggested that if the fees are going to increase the City need to have public hearings or public discussions at night when the working parents can attend.

Jorge Gonzalez, City Manager, gave an overview of "From Blue Ribbon to Blueprint" report. The Administration needs to make the Parks and Recreation Department a priority. The appropriate resources need to be allocated. The City of Miami Beach has many, many good programs already in place. The City's investment on a per capita basis is strong. There are two key elements; one is looking at our current organization and looking at our parks as individual franchised entities. The other key element is how we allocate our resources.

Robert Middaugh, Assistant City Manager, gave a PowerPoint Presentation (Blue Ribbon to Blueprint).

Commissioner Bower stated that she has not heard of a fee increase for the Bass Museum and there is a deficit. She stated that there are other cases of deficits where we do not increase the fees and the City finds the money. She instructed the Administration to explore all the issues before fee are increased. Let's do a good job and then increase the fees. She stated that she has a problem increasing the fees first. **Patricia Walker to handle.**

Robert Middaugh, Assistant City Manager, stated that the operating cost to run the Flamingo Pool is \$500,000 a year. At current charges the City will generate \$12,000 in entrance fees against the \$500,000 operating expense. The City is subsidizing the balance. If the new fee schedule is implemented, the City's subsidy will be reduced to \$85,000 a year.

Commissioner Bower stated the City should explore other options to increase revenue such as having programs that will bring in the revenues without increasing the entrance fees. She suggested that the Administration let the community know about the new pool and the different programs so that the community can start using the pool more. **Nannette Rodriguez to handle.**

Ms. Debra Leibowitz explained that everywhere you go, like a movie theater, you pay an entrance fee and concession fees if you purchase food and/or beverage. The City should explore the idea of having sponsored sports events or concession stands to help raise revenues. The City needs to come up with creative ideas for raising revenues.

Robert Middaugh, Assistant City Manager, stated that after Labor Day there is no fee to use the pool.

Mayor Dermer stated that he had suggested the use of Convention Development Tax (CDT) funds to help fund these facilities. The legislation states that this fund can be used for stadiums or professional facilities. If this City tack on the word "professional" to one of these facilities such and the Flamingo Park Pool, all you need to do is to have something like a professional synchronized swimming team do a performance at the pool and the facility will qualify for this fund.

Commissioner Gross stated to let Administration do this analysis. **Christina Cuervo to handle.**

Commissioner Gross stated that perhaps CDT funds could be used to build a skate park and asked for an updated on the skate park.

Jorge Gonzalez, City Manager, stated the issue of fee needs to be discussed further. He stated that the sentiment of the Commission is for the Administration to proceed with exploring different fee opportunities and develop an equitable way to implement.

Commissioner Smith stated that he has no problem with equitable fees as long as there is a resident versus nonresident rate, and that Commissioner Bower's concern is addressed dealing with individuals who cannot afford to pay.

Jorge Gonzalez, City Manager, stated that an idea is to have a park membership card. This would be an annual card. There is a whole host of different options that need to be explored.

Robert Middaugh, Assistant City Manager, gave an overview of discussions regarding a skate park. He stated that negotiations have been held with a company call Echo. The City is negotiating a mitigation settlement (Memorial Day 2001 sign violations) with Echo for them to build a \$100,000 skate park of approximately 14,000 sq. ft.

Jorge Gonzalez, City Manager, stated that he would like some directions and begin pursuing a location.

Commissioner Bower stated that when the decision is made for the location for the skate park that the surrounding community be involved in this decision. She wants the City to look at the issues of noise, parking, traffic, etc. and involve the community that will be impacted.

Vice-Mayor Steinberg stated that he is concerned about a company that violated City Laws to name the skate park after them does not make sense.

Commissioner Gross stated that the Committee requested a skate park and the Administration should be allowed to investigate a location.

Commissioner Smith suggested using the site at County's facility at North Shore Park.

Ms. Debra Leibowitz stated that a skate park was the number one recommendations at all of the community meetings.

Mayor Dermer thanked the City Manager and the committee for their hard work.

Commissioner Garcia stated to let the Administration look for a skate park site.

Handout or Reference Material:

1. Bounded book titled: "Serious Play: A Comprehensive Action Plan for Our Parks", undated. Committee members: Debra Leibowitz, chair, Julio Magrisso, Co-Chair, Amy Agnoli, Gary Heffner, Jodie Knofsky, Aileen Phelan, Michele Rivera, Dr. Jacqueline Salazar, Stacey Shane-Nusbaum, Amy Turkel.
2. Document titled "Miami Beach Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities Blue Ribbon Citizens' Committee", undated.
3. PowerPoint presentation given by the Administration titled: "From Blue Ribbon to Blueprint", undated.
4. PowerPoint presentation titled: "Parks & Recreation Programs Blue Ribbon Citizens Committee - Serious Play: A Comprehensive Action Plan for Our Parks", undated. Floppy disk containing the PowerPoint presentation is also include in the red-rope folder.

City Clerk's Note: Introduced the renaming of Bayshore Golf Course to Miami Beach Golf Club

Meeting adjourned at 5:33:43 p.m.